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# Information Please

ABOUT LEPROSY  
and  
AMERICAN LEPROSY MISSIONS, INC.

HOW WE BEGAN

HOW WE WORK

WHAT IS LEPROSY

HOW IT IS CONTROLLED

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Revised — 1954

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# **American Leprosy Missions**

## **HOW IT BEGAN—HOW IT WORKS**

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### ***How did American Leprosy Missions Begin?***

The first Protestant society formed for the exclusive purpose of ministering to people with leprosy was founded in Dublin, Ireland, in 1874, by a Scotsman, Wellesley C. Bailey, who had been deeply moved by their needs as a missionary in India. This society became The Mission to Lepers, of Edinburgh and later of London, with branches in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In 1906 an American Committee of it was also formed, which in 1920 was incorporated as the American Mission to Lepers. The present name was adopted in 1950 to avoid the ugly and unfair emotional connotations of the word "leper."

### ***How does the Mission to Lepers and American Leprosy Missions actually function to reach the people who have leprosy, in the countries where they live?***

By financial aid transmitted in four ways:

- a. Through independent units in France and Japan.
- b. Through interdenominational committees or Federations of Churches and Evangelical Alliances, in Brazil, Portugal, the Philippine

Islands, Angola and the Congo.

- c. Through mission boards of the Protestant and Anglican churches.
- d. Directly to local institutions called colonies, leprosaria, settlements, hospitals, clinics, or preventive villages according to their character.

### ***How many units are thus aided?***

Over 200 units in about 50 countries. Of these 142 are aided by American Leprosy Missions.

### ***What is the program of American Leprosy Missions?***

To give medical and surgical treatment, spiritual care and social rehabilitation to men, women and children with leprosy.

To protect healthy children of infected parents.

To help free the world from leprosy.

### ***How does it carry out this program?***

It provides funds for medical supplies, food, clothing, buildings, and the general maintenance of colonies, clinics and preventive villages; and in a few cases for missionaries' salaries.

It provides funds for Christian teaching and Christian churches in both mission and government colonies.

It maintains homes for the healthy children of infected parents.

It conducts through periodicals, descriptive leaflets and lectures an educational and fund-raising campaign.

It encourages governments to provide the material necessities for patients and to pass suitable laws for their care and treatment.

### ***How are the projects conducted which American Leprosy Missions aids?***

Cooperatively. The missionary ones are supervised by missionaries of the denominational and non-denominational boards, generally in addition to their other duties and without extra salary. The government ones are sometimes supervised by missionaries upon invitation of the officials; otherwise by an official, who often invites missionaries or a local Christian committee to do the religious, and in some cases the medical, work. A few are owned and supervised by a local Christian committee. American Leprosy Missions prefers to have no work of its own but to cooperate with some missionary, governmental or semi-public body.

### ***What kind of life do the patients have?***

If they must live in a colony they do as much as they can for themselves and for one another. About half of them are usually able to do farming, building, housework and skilled crafts. Children play happily and go to school. Church life is central.

But thousands are now being treated clinically in their own villages and homes.

## ***How do they respond to Christian teaching?***

Eagerly. Christianity is such a happy contrast to religions which neglect people with leprosy and regard the disease as a punishment for sins, that they gladly accept Christ, who loves "even these least."

## ***Is there still a need for the kind of work done by leprosy missions?***

Yes; only a small portion of "the ten million" are receiving any care. Daily, at almost every leprosarium in the world, pitiful applicants who have trudged sometimes hundreds of miles in the hope of finding shelter and treatment must be turned away, for lack of funds to keep them. Governments are still unable to fulfill their whole responsibility.

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# **What Is Leprosy AND HOW IS IT CONTROLLED**

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## ***What is a "leper"?***

Merely a man or woman or, very often, a child suffering from the disease of leprosy. The word *leper* is very regrettable, carrying as it does historic associations of fear, horror and repulsion. These emotional responses to people with leprosy are unjust and very damaging. Accordingly the word will not be used hereafter in this leaflet.

## **How many persons in the world have leprosy?**

No one knows. Ten million is an accepted estimate.

## **Where are they?**

Nearly everywhere, but the greatest numbers are in India, Burma, Siam, China, Japan, Korea, parts of Africa and parts of South America.

## **White people, then, don't get leprosy?**

On the contrary, leprosy swept Europe during the Middle Ages and was rooted out only by the most ruthless segregation. White people in close enough contact with it get it as readily as anyone.

## **But it is now a tropical disease, is it not?**

By no means. It caused alarm in Norway as late as the 1870's, and is still transmissible in the United States, Iran, North China, Korea. Its relation to climate is still unsolved. What appears to be climatic influence may be only bad hygiene and pitifully low standards of living.

## **What causes leprosy?**

A germ, *mycobacterium leprae*, first isolated and identified in 1874 by the Norwegian scientist, Hansen. (Hence the new name, *Hansen's Disease*, now often used.) There are, of



course, conditioning factors such as diet, inter-current diseases, vitality for any reason reduced, and perhaps climate.

### ***How does leprosy work in the body?***

It affects one or both of two areas: the skin and the nerve fibers. When it is principally operative in the skin, lumps called nodules appear and may become open ulcers. When it is principally affecting the nerves, the nerve fibers are gradually killed. At first there is pain, then loss of all feeling and often, as a result, the loss of flesh and bone.

### ***Is leprosy highly contagious?***

No; it is probably contagious only by direct and prolonged contact with an "open" case of the disease. The bacillus appears to be introduced into the body only through cuts and abrasions; perhaps also through the lining membrane of the nose. Nearly half of all cases are now regarded as "closed" and non-contagious.

### ***Is leprosy inherited?***

No; but susceptibility to it may perhaps be inherited and children seem especially susceptible. These two facts may lead to an appearance of inheritance.

### ***But aren't leprosy patients old people?***

By no means. Many who come to the colonies only look old because they have been so abused

and crippled. Some authorities believe that 85% of leprosy cases contracted it in childhood. Then it may incubate in the body for two years or for as long as thirty years. It is now increasingly discovered in children as the children of infested countries come increasingly under medical observation.

### ***Do people with leprosy suffer much pain?***

Yes, they suffer physically from fever and from recurrent local pain while the nerves are being attacked. But most of all, they suffer intense spiritual agony from being crippled, disfigured, blinded, cast out of society and treated as less than human.

### ***Can leprosy be cured?***

The word is now generally accepted, for modern treatment has resulted in thousands of cases being restored each year to apparently complete health.

### ***What is the modern treatment?***

A drug called diamino-diphenyl-sulfone. This is the parent substance of several compounds (Promin, Diasone, Sulphetrone, etc.) which it has largely superceded. It is sold under the trade names D.D.S., D.A.D.P.S., Avlosulphone, Disulone, and perhaps others. Its use still presents some dangers and failures but may be called on the whole successful.

A new phase has been entered, in orthopaedic and plastic surgery to correct deformities and disfigurements. Following this, rehabilitation in work and society is of the greatest importance.



Experiments looking toward immunization are also being made.

### ***What are the prospects of full control?***

Not immediate but steadily growing. The governments of a few countries or provinces have laid down programs for finding and treating all persons with leprosy.

There is a growing attempt to find children in a very early stage of infection and to arrest their cases; also to find children in exposed situations and prevent their infection. Research is going on quietly under an organization in the United States called the Leonard Wood Memorial and under the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association. A few missionary doctors are also giving some time to research.

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## **How You Can Have a Part**

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### ***How is this world-wide work financed?***

By contributions from individuals and local churches.

The denominational missionary budgets do not usually include appropriations for this specialized kind of work.

The boards of missions pay the salaries or allowances of their missionaries who give their time wholly or in part to this ministry, but as

a rule look to American Leprosy Missions for *the entire financial support* of the work itself; in a growing number of cases for salaries also.

***How much does American Leprosy Missions and its parent mission in London raise annually?***

About \$1,000,000, of which about \$600,000 is raised in America.

***Does the Mission receive bequests and annuities?***

Yes. See last page of this leaflet. Annuity agreements are issued at standard rates. Write for our Annuity leaflet.

***How can one obtain further information about this work?***

For stories, plays, fact leaflets, flannelgraph pictures, speakers, film strips, motion pictures (new and very attractive ones in colors, with no repulsive features) and our famous Pete Pig banks of bright colored plastics, write to nearest address on back of this leaflet.

***What will various amounts of money accomplish?***

The following figures are averages for all countries and subject to change.

\$.80 gives sulfone treatment to a patient for a year, including cost of shipping.

\$10.00 supplies general medical treatments to a patient for two years.

\$40.00 provides for the general care of an adult patient for one year; \$30.00 for a child.

Larger amounts will build wards, cottages, chapels, dormitories, dispensaries, etc.

***Where may gifts for leprosy work be sent?***

To any accredited volunteer representative or to any address on the next page.

Please Give

GENEROUSLY

The Need Was

NEVER SO GREAT

The Opportunities

NEVER SO MANY

## FORM OF BEQUEST

I give and bequeath to "AMERICAN LEPROSY MISSIONS, INC.," a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of New York, with its principal office at 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., the sum of

..... dollars,

or the following described property .....

.....  
which legacy I direct shall be paid over to the said corporation without any deduction on account of any inheritance taxes whether Federal or State, if any, which taxes I direct shall be paid out of my residuary estate.

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### AMERICAN LEPROSY MISSIONS, INC.

FORMERLY AMERICAN MISSION TO LEPERS, INC.

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#### *Branch Offices*

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